



The Prohibition of Congratulating Disbelievers on Their Holidays

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Contents

Introduction	2
Evidence That Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is Prohibited	3
Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is Prohibited by Consensus	3
It is a Trait of Following Rituals That Are <i>Non-Islâmic</i> Rituals	4
Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is a Form of Imitating Them	6
It is a Form of Witnessing Falsehood	7
Giving Gifts or Help for their Celebrations is Prohibited.....	8
The Covenant of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Prevented Disbelievers from Openly Displaying Their Religions	9
False Arguments Used to Permit Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays.....	11
It is Permissible to Congratulate Disbelievers on their Holidays if the Muslim has Good Intentions ...	11
Every <i>Ijtihâd</i> Is Correct	12
The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and Some <i>Sahâbah</i> entered Churches	13
Allâh Permitted Kindness toward Disbelievers and Obligated Justice and Goodness toward All	15
The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Accepted Gifts from Disbelievers	17
The <i>Sahâbah</i> Gave Gifts to Disbelievers.....	17
The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Permitted Christians to Perform Their Prayers in the <i>Masjid</i>	18
Conclusion	19

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Introduction

For Muslims living in societies in which *Islâm* is not widely practiced, and in particular, those in the West, a topic that is often raised is whether or not it is permissible to congratulate disbelievers around their holidays with statements such as “Merry Christmas”, “Happy Easter”, “Happy Valentine’s Day”, “Happy New Year” and so on.

In order to discuss this matter, it is essential to clarify what these statements actually mean and imply. This is based upon the well-known rule amongst the *Fuqahâ* (Jurists): “*Al-Hukmu ‘Alash-Shay’ Far’un ‘An Tasawwurihi* (Ruling upon something is based upon understanding its reality).”

¹

This is also referred to as and/or tied to: “*Tahqîq Manât al-Hukm* (Verification of the Focus of the Ruling).” ²

What this means is that if someone misunderstands the issue they are ruling on, they cannot be expected to issue a correct ruling on it.

So when someone says, for example, “Merry Christmas”, what they are saying is “Have a happy Christmas” or “Enjoy Christmas.” And it is known that Christmas is celebrated by Christians as the birthday of their god. So essentially, what is being said is “Enjoy your celebration of the birth of your god.”

And if someone says: “Happy Easter”, they are in reality saying: “Enjoy the day you celebrate the resurrection of your god from the dead.”

And Ibn al-Qayyim explained the reason these congratulatory statements are prohibited. He said: “It is like congratulating someone for prostrating to the cross, or even worse than that. It is as great a sin as congratulating someone for drinking wine, or murdering someone, or having illicit sexual relations, and so on.” ³

And it is unfathomable that, when the Jews currently living in Bilâd ash-Shâm celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut, which is the Israeli Independence Day, or the commemoration of parts of Bilâd ash-Shâm being handed over to the Jews, a Muslim would accept another Muslim congratulating them when they celebrate that day. Likewise, if a child was killed, and people

¹ Refer to “*Talbîs Iblîs*”, pg. 295, by Ibn al-Jawzî, “*Haqîqat al-Qawlayn*”, pg. 64-65, by Al-Ghazâlî, and elsewhere.

² Refer to “*Al-Muwâfaqât*” Vol. 4/95, by ash-Shâtibî, “*Minhâj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah*”, Vol. 2/287, by Ibn Taymiyyah, and elsewhere.

³ “*Ahkâm Ahl ath-Thimmah*”, Vol. 1/441-442

started celebrating that day, would it be fine to congratulate them on that day? So why, when it comes to matters of *shirk* and *kufr*, which are direct insults toward Allâh, would anyone question this?

So, to this end, I have collected the evidence used by the People of Knowledge, proving that this is prohibited, along with a refutation of the evidence that supposedly proves the permissibility of these statements.

Evidence That Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is Prohibited

Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is Prohibited by Consensus

Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 H.) said: “Congratulating the disbelievers on the rituals that belong only to them is prohibited by consensus, as is congratulating them on their festivals and fasts by saying ‘A happy festival to you’ or ‘May you enjoy your festival,’ and so on. Even if the one who says this didn’t fall into outright disbelief by doing so, it is still prohibited. It is like congratulating someone for prostrating to the cross, or even worse than that. It is as great a sin as congratulating someone for drinking wine, or murdering someone, or having illicit sexual relations, and so on. Many of those who have no respect for their religion fall into this error; they do not realize the offensiveness of their actions. Whoever congratulates a person for his disobedience or *Bid’ah* or *kufr* exposes himself to the wrath and anger of Allâh.”⁴

And amongst the plethora of scholars who discussed consensus being a proof are: Abul-Walîd al-Bâjî (d. 474 H.),⁵ Abû Is’hâq ash-Shîrâzî (d. 476 H.),⁶ *Imâm al-Haramayn* al-Juwaynî (d. 478 H.),⁷ Abul-Muthaffir as-Sam’ânî (d. 489 H.),⁸ Abul-Khattâb al-Kalûthânî (d. 510 H.),⁹ ‘Alâ’ ad-Dîn as-Samarqandî (d. 540 H.),¹⁰ ‘Alâ’ ad-Dîn al-Asmandî (d. 552 H.),¹¹ ‘Alâ’ ad-Dîn al-Bukhârî al-Hanafî (d. 730 H.),¹² Tâj ad-Dîn as-Subkî (d. 771 H.),¹³ Abul-Fidâ’ Ibn Kathîr (d. 774 H.),¹⁴ Badr ad-Dîn az-Zarkashî (d. 794 H.),¹⁵ Muhibbillâh Ibn ‘Abdish-Shukûr al-Hanafî (d. 1119 H.) and ‘Abdul-‘Alî as-Sahâlawî al-Ansârî (d. 1225 H.),¹⁶ and many others.

So those who make statements like: “I respect Ibn al-Qayyim’s opinion, but I don’t agree with it”, are not disagreeing with Ibn al-Qayyim’s opinion, they are contradicting a matter of

⁴ “*Ahkâm Ahl ath-Thimmah*”, Vol. 1/441-442

⁵ “*Ihkâm al-Fusûl Fî Ahkâm al-Usûl*”, Vol. 2/449

⁶ “*Al-Lumu’ Fî Usûl al-Fiqh*”, pg. 179

⁷ “*Al-Waraqât*”, pg. 8

⁸ “*Qawâti’ al-Adillah Fil-Usûl*”, Vol. 2/385

⁹ “*At-Tamhîd Fî Usûl al-Fiqh*”, Vol. 3/224

¹⁰ “*Mîzân al-Usûl Fî Natâ’ij al-‘Uqûl*”, pg. 792

¹¹ “*Bathl an-Nathar Fil-Usûl*”, pg. 522

¹² “*Kashf al-Asrâr*”, Vol. 3/374

¹³ “*Al-Ibhâj Fî Sharh al-Minhâj*”, Vol. 2/5

¹⁴ “*Tafsîr al-Qur’ân al-‘Athîm*”, Vol. 1/590

¹⁵ “*Al-Bahr al-Muhîl Fî Usûl al-Fiqh*”, Vol. 6/385

¹⁶ “*Fawâtiḥ ar-Rahmût Sharh Musallam ath-Thubût*”, Vol. 2/262

consensus. And in order to prove that it isn't a matter of consensus, they need to come up with someone before Ibn al-Qayyim, or at the very least, within his time, that said it is permitted to congratulate disbelievers on their holidays. It is insufficient to come up with some contemporary people and say that they said it is okay to do.

It is a Trait of Following Rituals That Are *Non-Islâmic* Rituals

Celebrations are matters which are legislated as an act of worship, not a matter of worldly customs. This is evident in the following *Hadîth* about the Day of *Al-Fitr* or *al-Adh'hâ*:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ: "إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ عِيدًا وَهَذَا عِيدُنَا."

On the authority of 'Ā'ishah, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, in which the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: "Verily, every people has its celebration and verily this is our celebration."¹⁷

Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H.) stated in his explanation of this *Hadîth*: "This is evidence in a number of ways: One of them is that his, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, statement: "Verily, every people has its celebration and verily this is our celebration." Indeed this necessitates each people being unique in their specific *Īd*. As He, سبحانه, said:

﴿وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا﴾

﴿And for every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers).﴾¹⁸

And He, تعالى, said:

﴿لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا﴾

﴿To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.﴾¹⁹

This necessitates each people being unique in their specific direction to face as well as their prescribed law. So if the Jews have an *Īd* and the Christians have an *Īd*, which is specific to them, we do not share it with them just as we do not share their direction of facing in prayer nor their prescribed law. And based upon this as well we would not allow them to share our *Īd* with us."²⁰

¹⁷ Narrated by Al-Bukhârî (#952 and #3,931) and Muslim (#892).

¹⁸ *Sûrat al-Baqarah*, 148

¹⁹ *Sûrat al-Mâ'idah*, 48

²⁰ "Iqtidhâ' as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm", pg. 227.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمَدِينَةَ وَهُمْ يَوْمَانِ يَلْعَبُونَ فِيهِمَا فَقَالَ: "مَا هَذَانِ الْيَوْمَانِ؟" قَالُوا: "كُنَّا نَلْعَبُ فِيهِمَا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ." فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَبْدَلَكُمْ بِمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا يَوْمَ الْأَضْحَى وَيَوْمَ الْفِطْرِ."

Also, it has come on the authority of Anas Ibn Mâlik, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who said: "When the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, came to Al-Madînah, they had two days in which they would amuse themselves. So he said: "What are these two days?" They said: "We used to amuse ourselves on them during *Jâhiliyyah*." So the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: "Indeed, Allâh has given you instead of them two days that are better than them: the Day of Al-Adh'hâ and the Day of Al-Fitr." ²¹

Ibn Taymiyyah, رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ, stated in his explanation of this *Hadîth*: "The way this is used as evidence is that the two days in *Jâhiliyyah* were not upheld by the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, nor did he leave them to amuse themselves during them as they customarily did. Instead he said: 'He has given you two different days in their place.' And something replacing something else necessitates abandoning what has been replaced. This is because it is not possible for the replacement and the replaced to be joined together at once." ²²

Shaykh al-Islâm Ibn Taymiyyah, رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ, also said: "Celebrations are part of the *Sharî'ah*, the clear way and the ritual acts of worship about which Allâh, سُبْحَانَهُ, said:

﴿لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شَرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا﴾

﴿To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.﴾ ²³

And He said:

﴿لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ﴾

﴿For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies which they must follow.﴾ ²⁴

...like the *Qiblah*, *Salât* and fasting. So there is no difference between their participation in the celebrations and their participation in all other rituals. So conforming in full with a celebration is conforming to *kufr*, and conforming to some of its branches is conforming in some of the branches of *kufr*.

²¹ Narrated by Abû Dâwûd (#1,134). It was declared "*Sahîh*" by An-Nawawî in "*Khulâsat al-Ahkâm Fî Muhimmât as-Sunani Wa Qawâ'id al-Islâm*", 2/819, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî in "*Bulûgh al-Marâm Min Adillat al-Ahkâm*", #138 and elsewhere, and As-San'ânî in "*Al-'Uddah*", 2/540. Ibn Taymiyyah also declared it authentic according to the conditions of Muslim in "*Iqtidhâ' as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm*", pg. 219.

²² "*Iqtidhâ' as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm*", pg. 219.

²³ *Sûrat al-Mâ'idah*, 48

²⁴ *Sûrat al-Hajj*, 67

"Indeed, celebrations are one of the most unique features that distinguish various legislations and among their most prominent symbols, so conforming to them is conforming to the most characteristic legislations of *kufir* and most prominent of its symbols. And there is no doubt that conforming to this may lead to complete *kufir*."

"As for its most basic ruling, then at the very least, it is a (form of) disobedience. This was indicated by the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, when he said: "*Verily, every people has its celebration and verily this is our celebration.*"²⁵ And this is worse than participating with them in wearing the *Zinâr*²⁶ and its likes from their symbols, as those are manmade symbols which are not from the religion, rather the purpose behind them is simply to distinguish between the Muslim and the disbeliever. As for the celebrations and (religious) rituals, this is part of the religion which is cursed along with its followers, so joining in with it is joining in with something that is a cause of incurring the wrath and punishment of Allâh."²⁷

So we see that the same address was used for *Īds* as was used for the *Qiblah* of the Muslims.

As a result, *Īds* are at the same level of the *Qiblah*, in that we cannot add, subtract or change anything regarding them within our religion. , we cannot use those of another religion in any way. So for us to then congratulate others for following a ritual other than what is acceptable in *Islâm* is something that is completely rejected.

Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays is a Form of Imitating Them

Saying things like "Merry Christmas", "Happy Easter", and so on, is a clear form of imitating disbelievers in their actions which they themselves are known for.

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ."

'Abdullâh Ibn 'Umar Ibn al-Khâttâb narrated that the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: "*Whoever imitates a people, then he is from them.*"²⁸

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: "مَنْ بَنَى بِلَادِ الْأَعَاجِمِ وَصَنَعَ نِيْرُوزَهُمْ وَمَهْرَجَاتَهُمْ وَتَشَبَّهَ بِهِمْ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ وَهُوَ كَذَلِكَ خَسِرَ مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."

²⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhârî (#952 and #3,931) and Muslim (#892).

²⁶ This was a type of clothing that was specified as specific to *Ahl ath-Thimmah*

²⁷ "*Iqtidhâ' as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm*", pg. 241.

²⁸ Narrated by Ahmad in his "*Musnad*" Vol. 2/50 and Abû Dâwûd in his "*Sunan*", (#4,031). This was declared "*Sahîh*" by Ibn Hibbân as mentioned in "*Bulûgh al-Marâm*", (#437), Al-'Irâqî in his *Takhrîj* of "*Ihyâ' 'Ulûm ad-Dîn*", Vol. 1/359, Al-Bahûtî in "*Kashâf al-Qinâ'*", Vol. 1/286 and others. It was also declared "*Jayyid*" by Ibn Taymiyyah in "*Majmû' al-Fatâwâ*", Vol. 25/331 and "*Hasan*" by Al-'Asqalânî in "*Fat'h al-Bârî*", Vol. 10/282 and As-Suyûtî in "*Al-Jâmi' as-Saghîr*", (#8,593). Although there is some dispute concerning the authenticity of this *Hadîth*, it comes from 'Abdullâh Ibn 'Umar through two paths: one in the books mentioned above and the second by At-Tahâwî in "*Sharh Mushkil al-Athâr*" (#231). It also comes by the way of Anas Ibn Mâlik in *Marfû'* form in "*Akhbâr Asbahân*" Vol. 1/129, and a number of other *Sahâbah*. And our *Shaykh* Sulaymân Ibn Nâsir al-'Alwân stated that it is "*Hasan*".

And ‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Âs , رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا , said: “Whoever lives in the land of the non-Arabs, participates in their *Nayrûz* (Persian New Year) and their *Mahrajân* (Vernal equinox), and imitates them until he dies while in that state, he will be resurrected with them on the Day of Resurrection.” ²⁹

So here it is clear that imitating the disbelievers in aspects that are specific to them makes one deserving of being with them; in the worldly life, the Hereafter, or both, depending on what they have imitated. So what would we say about someone who imitates them in their statements related to their religious celebrations, and is actually congratulating them for them?

It is a Form of Witnessing Falsehood

Allâh, تعالى, stated:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا﴾

﴿And those who do not witness falsehood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass it by with dignity.﴾ ³⁰

It has been narrated from the *Sahâbi* ‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Abbâs, ³¹ as well as the *Tâbi’în*: Mujâhid, ³² Abul-‘Âliyah, Tâwûs, Muhammad Ibn Sîrîn, Adh-Dhahhâk, Ar-Rabî’ Ibn Anas and others that what is meant by the falsehood in this Verse is the *‘Îds* of the *Mushrikîn*. ³³

This was also used as evidence by *Imâm* Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 H.) for the prohibition of participating in the *‘Îds* of the Christians and the Jews, as was narrated by Ibn Taymiyyah. ³⁴

So if, according to many from amongst the *Sahâbah*, *Tâbi’în* and scholars after them, the celebrations of the disbelievers are the falsehood that is being discussed in this Verse, what does one say about someone who congratulates disbelievers for this falsehood?

عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ سَلَمَةَ سَمِعَ أَبَاهُ سَمِعَ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: "اجْتَنِبُوا أَعْدَاءَ اللَّهِ فِي عِيدِهِمْ."

And this understanding is clearly seen in the narration from Sa’îd Ibn Salamah who heard his father who heard from ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, that he said: “Avoid the enemies of Allâh during their *‘Îd*.” ³⁵

²⁹ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqî in his “*Sunan*”, (#18,642). It was declared “*Sahîh*” by Ibn Taymiyyah in “*Iqtidhâ’ as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm*”, pg. 233 as well as Ibn al-Qayyim in “*Ahkâm Ahl ath-Thimmah*”, Vol. 3/1248.

³⁰ *Sûrat al-Furqân*, 72

³¹ Look to “*Al-Jâmi’ Li’Ahkâm al-Qur’ân*”, Vol. 13/78, by *Imâm* al-Qurtubî

³² Look to “*Ma’âlim at-Tanzîl*”, Vol. 1/98, by *Imâm* al-Baghawî

³³ “*Tafsîr al-Qur’ân al-‘Athîm*”, Vol. 10/331, by *Imâm* Ibn Kathîr

³⁴ “*Iqtidhâ’ as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm Mukhâlafati Ahl al-Jahîm*”, pg. 234-235.

³⁵ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqî in “*As-Sunan al-Kubrâ*”, (#18,641). I asked the *Muhaddith*, *Shaykh* ‘Adul-‘Azîz Ibn Marzûq at-Tarîfî, حفظه الله, about the authenticity of this narration and he stated that it is “*Sahîh*.”

So here, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, is telling us to stay away from disbelievers during their celebrations. So would we then say that, we should stay away from them when they are taking part in these things, but congratulating them on the cause for us having to stay away from them is fine?

Giving Gifts or Help for their Celebrations is Prohibited

Another form of congratulations that the scholars have clearly prohibited is giving gifts for these celebrations. So, just as they prohibited congratulating them with words, they also prohibited congratulating them with deeds.

Ibn al-Qâsim al-Mâlikî (d. 191 H.) regarded it as hated to give a gift to a Christian on the occasion of his festival, or to give palm leaves to a Jew on his festivals.³⁶

Abû Hafs al-Bukhârî al-Hanafî (d. 217 H.) said: “Whoever gives an egg to a disbeliever out of honour for that day has disbelieved in Allâh, may He be exalted.”³⁷

Ibn az-Zâghûnî al-Hanbalî (d. 527 H.) stated: “It is prohibited to attend the festivals of the Jews and Christians and to sell them things or give them gifts on the occasion of their festivals.”³⁸

Fakhr ad-Dîn al-Zayla’î al-Hanafî (d. 743 H.) said: “Giving gifts on the occasion of An-Nayrûz and Al-Mahrjân is not permissible, i.e., giving gifts on these two days is prohibited, and is in fact *kufir*. Abû Hafs al-Kabîr, رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ, said: If a man were to worship Allâh for fifty years, then on the day of Nayrûz he were to give an egg as a gift to one of the *mushrikîn*, intending thereby to honour that day, he would have committed *kufir* and his good deeds would be cancelled out. The author of ‘*Al-Jâmi’ al-Asghar*’ said: If he gives a gift to another Muslim on the day of Nayrûz, not intending thereby to honour that day, but it is the habit of some people to give gifts on that day, then this is not regarded as *kufir*. But he should not do it on that particular day; he should do it before or after, so that he will not be imitating those people. The Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” It says in ‘*Al-Jâmi’ al-Asghar*’: A man bought something on the day of An-Nayrûz which he did not buy before that. If he intended thereby to honour that day as the *mushrikûn* honour it, then he has committed *kufir*, but if he wanted to eat or drink or enjoy himself, then he has not committed *kufir*.”³⁹

Ibn at-Turkmânî al-Hanafî (d. 750 H.) said: “The Muslim is sinning if he sits with them or helps them to slaughter animals or cook food, or he lends them a riding-beast to take them to their celebrations or festivals.”⁴⁰

³⁶ “*At-Tâj wal-Iklîl*”, Vol. 4/319

³⁷ “*Fat’h al-Bârî*”, Vol. 2/315

³⁸ “*Al-Iqnâ*”, by Ibn az-Zâghûnî

³⁹ “*Tabyîn al-Haqâ’iq Sharh Kanz ad-Daqâ’iq*”, Vol. 6/228

⁴⁰ “*Al-Lama’ Fil-Hawâdithi wal-Bida’*”, Vol. 1/492

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “Ibn al-Qâsim regarded it as hated for a Muslim to give a Christian anything on the occasion of his festival to congratulate him. He saw that as respecting their festival and helping them in their *kufir*. Do you not see that it is prohibited for Muslims to sell anything to the Christians that assists them in celebrating their festival; no meat, nor food, nor clothing? They should not loan their riding-beasts to them or assist them in any way with their festival, because that is like honouring their *shirk* and helping them with their *kufir*. The authorities should prevent Muslims from doing this. This is the opinion of Mâlik and others, and I do not know of any dispute on this point.” ⁴¹

Ibn Nujaym al-Hanafî (d. 970 H.) stated: “And giving gifts in the name of An-Nayrûz and Al-Mahrajân is not allowed. In Other words, gifts in the name of these two days is prohibited, rather, it is disbelief.” ⁴²

And it is well known that, a gift that is given for a celebration may have further reaching benefits for the recipient, such as clothing keeping them warm on days other than their *Îd*, giving them nourishment before or after the *Îd* and so on. So if this is prohibited, then what would we say about something that doesn’t even have these benefits, and simply serves to glorify that day or time of year?

The Covenant of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Prevented Disbelievers from Openly Displaying Their Religions

Another area we can look to for guidance on this issue is what ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb stipulated upon the disbelievers in the *Islâmic* State: And if we look to the Conditions of ‘Umar, ⁴³ we see the following:

⁴¹ (2/625-725)

⁴² “Al-Bahr ar-Râ’iq Sharh Kanz ad-Daqa’iq”, Vol. 5/25

⁴³ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqî in “*As-Sunan al-Kubrâ*”, Vol. 9/202, Ibn al-A’râbî “*Al-Mu’jam*”, Vol. 1/358, Ibn ‘Asâkir in “*Târîkh Dimashq*”, Vol. 2/174, As-Subkî in his “*Fatâwâ*”, Vol. 4/219, and others.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned one of the narrations and said: “Its chain is authentic.” “*As-Sârim al-Maslûl ‘Alâ Shâtîm ar-Rasûl*”, pg. 208, and he mentioned some of the conditions and then said: “It was narrated by Harb with a ‘*Jayyid*’ chain.” “*Iqtidhâ’ as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm*”, Vol. 1/320. And he said: “And these conditions are the most famous thing in the books of *Fiqh* and Knowledge. And there is a consensus upon them, in general, amongst the scholars from the followed *Imâms*, their companions and the rest of the *Imâms*.” “*Iqtidhâ’ as-Sirât al-Mustaqîm*”, Vol. 1/321.

Ibn al-Qayyim stated: “And the fame of these conditions suffice over its chain (of narration), because the *Imâms* have received it with acceptance and mentioned it in their books. And they used them as proof. And mention of the Conditions of ‘Umar has not ceased to be upon their tongues and in their books. And the *Khalîfahs* implemented them after him and acted upon what they instruct.” “*Ahkâm Ahl ath-Thimmah*”, Vol. 3/1159

And Ibn Kathîr mentioned that it has good chains. “*Irshâd al-Faqîh Ilâ Ma’rifat Adillat at-Tanbîh*”, Vol. 2/340.

And he mentioned that it has chains that support each other. “*Musnad al-Fârûq Wa Aqwâluhu ‘Alâ Abwâb al-‘Ilm*”, Vol. 2/489.

إِنَّا حِينَ قَدِمْتَ بِلَادَنَا طَلَبْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْأَمَانَ لِنَفْسِنَا وَأَهْلِ مِلَّتِنَا عَلَى أَنَّا شَرَطْنَا لَكَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِنَا

When you marched against us: we asked of you protection for ourselves, our posterity, our possessions, and our co-religionists; and we made this stipulation with you:

أَلَّا نُحْدِثَ فِي مَدِينَتِنَا كَنِيسَةً وَلَا فِيمَا حَوْلَهَا دَيْرًا وَلَا قِلَائَةً وَلَا صَوْمَعَةً رَاهِبٍ

That we will not erect in our city or the suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage.

وَلَا نُجَدِّدَ مَا خُرِبَ مِنْ كَنَائِسِنَا وَلَا مَا كَانَ مِنْهَا فِي خُطَطِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And that we will not repair any of such buildings that may fall into ruins, or renew those that may be situated in the Muslim quarters of the town.

وَأَلَّا نَضْرِبَ بَنَوَاقِيسِنَا إِلَّا ضَرْبًا خَفِيًّا فِي جُوفِ كَنَائِسِنَا

And that we will not strike our clappers except lightly in our churches.

وَلَا نُظْهِرَ عَلَيْهَا صَلْبًا

And that we will not display the cross upon them.

وَلَا تُرْفَعُ أَصْوَاتُنَا فِي الصَّلَاةِ وَلَا الْقِرَاءَةِ فِي كَنَائِسِنَا فِيمَا يَحْضُرُهُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ

And that we will not perform our prayers nor recitations in a loud voice when Muslims are present in our churches.

وَأَلَّا نُخْرِجَ صَلْبًا وَلَا كِتَابًا فِي سُوقِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And that we will not display a cross or (sacred) book in the markets of the Muslims.

وَأَلَّا نُخْرِجَ بَاغُوثًا - قَالَ: وَالْبَاغُوثُ يَجْتَمِعُونَ كَمَا يَخْرُجُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ يَوْمَ الْأَضْحَى وَالْفِطْرِ - وَلَا شَعَائِينَ

And that we will not go out in processions on Easter nor on Palm Sunday.

وَلَا نُرْفَعُ أَصْوَاتَنَا مَعَ مَوْتَانَا وَلَا نُظْهِرَ التَّيْرَانَ مَعَهُمْ فِي أَسْوَاقِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And that we will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the markets of the Muslims when burying our dead.

وَلَا نُظْهِرَ شِرْكًا

And that we will not display any *shirk*.

وَلَا نُرْغَبُ فِي دِينِنَا وَلَا نَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ أَحَدًا

And that we will not make a show of our religion nor invite any one to embrace it.

So we see that, when possible, the disbelievers themselves aren't to be permitted to display these things, so what about a Muslim congratulating them on it?

One might argue: This is in an *Islâmic* State when Muslims have the authority, however, in the West; disbelievers have authority, so we can't implement this. Although this is true, and no one is arguing this, it does not change the fact that these conditions of 'Umar give us an understanding of the goals of the *Sharî'ah*. More specifically, the goal of stopping *shirk* and *kufr*. So if this is the case, then how can it be permitted for a Muslim to actually congratulate a disbeliever for their believing or performing *shirk* or *kufr*?

False Arguments Used to Permit Congratulating Disbelievers on their Holidays

It is Permissible to Congratulate Disbelievers on their Holidays if the Muslim has Good Intentions

Many say that, if the Muslim has a good intention, for example, wanting to give disbelievers a good view of *Islâm*, then these things are permitted. However, something that is prohibited does not cease to be prohibited due to the intention of the one who commits them.

Abû Hâmid Al-Ghazâlî (d. 505 H.) said, "Sins do not change their nature by intention. So the ignorant one should not understand that, from the generality of his, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, 's saying: **"Actions are based on intentions"**, that a sin can be turned into an obedience by (a good) intention, such as the person who backbites a man to please the heart of someone else, feeds a needy person with someone else's money or builds a school, a Masjid or a military camp with unlawful money, while his intention is to do good. This is all ignorance, and the intention has no effect in ruling out its being a transgression, a wrongdoing and a sin. In fact, his intending to do good by an evil means – which opposes the requirement of the *Sharî'ah* – is another evil. So if he is aware of this (evil means), then he is stubborn in regards to the *Sharî'ah*. But if he ignores it, then he is sinful for being ignorant, because seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim. In addition, since good things can only be known as such by the *Sharî'ah*, how can an evil be good, then? That is very unlikely. As a matter of fact, the things which cause this in the heart are the hidden pleasure and the inner desire..."

Then he went on to say, "What is implied is that whoever ignorantly intends to do good by means of a sin, he will not be excused, unless he is new in *Islâm* and does not have the time wherein he can acquire the knowledge, and Allâh, the Most High, indeed said: **"So ask those who possess the Reminder if you know not."**⁴⁴

And he (i.e. Al-Ghazâlî) further said – "Therefore his, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, 's saying: **"Actions are based on intentions"** is restricted, as far as the three categories are concerned, to obediences and permitted things (i.e. *Mubâhât*), but not to sins. This is because an obedience can be turned

⁴⁴ *Sûrat an-Nahl*, 43

into a sin by the (the wrong) intention. Also the permitted action (i.e. *Mubâh*) can be turned into a sin or an obedience by the intention. **In contrast, a sin can never be turned into an obedience by the (good) intention.** Yes, the intention could have an interference in it (i.e. the sin); and that is when (other) evil intentions are added to it, and which would increase its burden and its great evil result – as we have mentioned in the Book of Repentance.”⁴⁵

Furthermore, by someone trying to use this false rule, they are already accepting that this action is wrong. Otherwise, there would be no need to have a secondary reason to permit it.

Every *Ijtihâd* Is Correct

Some try to state that, as long as someone arrives at this opinion through *Ijtihâd*, it is correct. And by extension, it is acceptable to follow this opinion. And they try to use the following *Hadîth* as evidence for this false rule:

عَنْ عُمَرُو بْنِ الْعَاصِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ".

On the authority of ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Âs, that he heard the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, saying: “If the ruler judges by performing *Ijtihâd* and is correct, then he receives two rewards. And if he judges by performing *Ijtihâd* and is mistaken, then he receives one reward.”⁴⁶

They state that since both receive rewards, both are correct. However, the *Hadîth* itself is evidence that this rule is false. The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: “And if he judges by performing *Ijtihâd* and is mistaken, then he receives one reward.” So with his own words, he affirmed that it is a mistake.

However, Allâh, تعالى, said:

﴿وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا حُكْمَهُمْ شَاهِدِينَ فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكَلَّا أَتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعَلَّمْنَا﴾

﴿And (remember) Dâwûd and Sulaymân, when they gave judgement in the case of the field in which the sheep of certain people had pastured at night and We were witness to their judgement. And We made Sulaymân to understand (the case).⁴⁷﴾

So when Dâwûd and Sulaymân arrived at different rulings, Allâh told us that He gave the correct understanding on the issue to Sulaymân.

⁴⁵ “Ihyâ’ Ulûm Ad-Dîn”, Vol. 4/388-391

⁴⁶ Agreed upon

⁴⁷ *Sûrat al-Anbiyâ*, 79

Imâm Ibn ‘Abdil-Barr (d. 463 H.) stated: “Difference of opinion is not a proof according to anyone that I know of from the scholars of *Fiqh* of the *Ummah*, except for he who has no sight nor any knowledge, and there is no proof in his statement.” ⁴⁸

So we know that even if some scholars of the past permitted this (which none did) it wouldn’t be a proof.

The Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and Some *Sahâbah* entered Churches

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ابْتَعَثَ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِإِدْخَالِ رَجُلٍ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ فَدَخَلَ الْكَنِيسَةَ فَإِذَا هُوَ يَهُودٌ وَإِذَا يَهُودِيٌّ يَقْرَأُ عَلَيْهِمُ التَّوْرَةَ فَلَمَّا أَتَوْا عَلَى صِفَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمْسَكُوا وَفِي نَاحِيَّتِهَا رَجُلٌ مَرِيضٌ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا لَكُمْ أَمْسَكْتُمْ قَالَ الْمَرِيضُ إِنَّهُمْ أَتَوْا عَلَى صِفَةِ نَبِيٍّ فَأَمْسَكُوا ثُمَّ جَاءَ الْمَرِيضُ يَجُوبُ حَتَّى أَخَذَ التَّوْرَةَ فَقَرَأَ حَتَّى أَتَى عَلَى صِفَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَمَّتِهِ فَقَالَ هَذِهِ صِفَتُكَ وَصِفَةُ أُمَّتِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِأَصْحَابِهِ لَوْ أَخَاكُمُ.

On the authority of Ibn Mas’ûd who said: “Indeed, Allâh, عَزَّ وَجَلَّ, sent His Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, to enter a man into *Jannah*. So he entered the church, and saw Jews, and a Jew was reciting the *Tawrât* to them. Then when they reached the description of the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, they stopped. And in its corner, there was an ill man. So the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, asked: ‘Why did you stop?’ So the ill man replied: ‘They came to the description of a Prophet, so they stopped.’ Then the ill man came crawling until he took the *Tawrât*, then he recited until he reached the description of the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and his *Ummah*, then said: ‘This is your description and the description of your *Ummah*. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh and that you are the Messenger of Allâh.’ Then he died. So the Prophet, صلى الله عليه وسلم, said to his Companions: ‘Take care of your Brother.’” ⁴⁹

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ أُمَّ حَبِيبَةَ وَأُمَّ سَلَمَةَ ذَكَرَتَا كَنِيسَةً رَأَيْنَهَا بِالْحَبَشَةِ فِيهَا تَصَاوِيرُ فَذَكَرَتَا لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: "إِنَّ أَوْلَيْكَ إِذَا كَانَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ فَمَاتَ بَنَوْا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ الصُّورَ فَأُولَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."

On the authority of ‘Â’i’sah who said: “Umm Habîbah and Umm Salamah mentioned a church they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were pictures. They told the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, about it, so he said, “If any righteous man dies amongst those people they would build a place of worship upon his grave and make these pictures in it. They will be the worst of creation in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection.” ⁵⁰

The use of this evidence is rejected for a number of reasons:

⁴⁸ “*Jâmi’ Bayân al-Ilmi Wa Fadhlîh*”, Vol. 2/89, and look to “*Al-Muhallâ Fî Sharh al-Mujallâ Bil-Hujajî wal-Âthâr*”, by Ibn Hazm, Vol. 1/70

⁴⁹ Narrated by Ahmad (#3951), Ibn Abî Shaybah in his “*Musanna’*” (#384), and At-Tabrânî in *Al-Mu’jam Al-Kabîr* (#10295).

⁵⁰ Narrated by Al-Bukhârî (#412) and Muslim (#827)

- These *Ahâdîth* have nothing to do with congratulating disbelievers around their holidays. The closest argument someone could make with these *Ahâdîth* are stating that the entering into churches is similar to congratulating disbelievers, in that it is an approval of what they are upon. If this is what is meant, then they are saying that when the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, entered this church, he was approving of the disbelief of the Jews. If this is the case, then they are stating that the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, approved of something that he was sent to wipe out, which is completely illogical, let alone an accusation that the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, performed *kufr*.

عَنْ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "إِنَّ لِي أَسْمَاءً أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَنَا أَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا الْمَاحِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِي الْكُفْرَ وَأَنَا الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ عَلَى قَدَمِي وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ."

On the authority of Jubayr Ibn Mut'im who said: "I heard the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, saying: 'I have several names: I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad, and I am Al-Mâhî with whom Allâh obliterates *kufr*, and I am Al-Hâshir (gatherer) at whose feet the people will be gathered, and I am Al-'Âqib (i.e. who succeeds the other Prophets in bringing about good).'"

51

- The narration the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, was declared "*Dha'îf*" by Ahmad Shâkir ⁵² and Al-Albânî. ⁵³ And there are to defects in the chain of this *Hadîth*. The first is that it is from the narration of Hammâd Ibn Salamah on the authority of 'Atâ' Ibn as-Sâ'ib. And 'Atâ' Ibn as-Sâ'ib became mixed up in his old age when it came to narrating his *Ahâdîth*. And Hammâd Ibn Salamah heard from him before and after this, so unless it is clear that a narration took place before this, it is suspect. ⁵⁴ The second is that it is from the narration of Abû 'Ubaydah Ibn 'Abdillâh Ibn Mas'ûd on the authority of his father 'Abdullâh Ibn Mas'ûd. And Abû 'Ubaydah did not hear *Ahâdîth* from his father. However, this defect is disputed, due to Abû 'Ubaydah narrating from the trustworthy companions of his father. ⁵⁵
- We know that it is prohibited to remain in the presence of *kufr* being committed without rebuking it or leaving. Allâh, تعالى, said:

﴿وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

⁵¹ Agreed upon, and this is one of Al-Bukhârî's phrasings

⁵² "*Musnad Ahmad*", Vol. 6/24

⁵³ "*Irwâ' al-Ghalîl*", Vol. (#2,479)

⁵⁴ Look to "*Adh-Dhu'afâ*", by Al-'Uqaylî, Vol. 3/993 and "*At-Tahthîb*" by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî, Vol. 7/702

⁵⁵ Look to "*Fat'h al-Bârî*", by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalî, Vol. 5/187, "*An-Nukat*", by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî, Vol. 1/398, "*As-Sunan*" by Ad-Dâraqutnî, Vol. 1/145, "*Al-'Ilal*", by Ad-Dâraqutnî, Vol. 5/290, "*Al-Jâmi*", by At-Tirmithî, Vol. 1/338 and Vol. 2/202, "*Al-Mustadrak 'Alas-Sahîhayn*", by Al-Hâkim, Vol. 1/681 and Vol. 2/121, "*At-Tamhîd*", by Ibn 'Abdil-Barr, Vol. 24/293 and elsewhere.

﴿And when you see those who engage in a false conversation about Our Verses (of the *Qur'ân*) by mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic. And if Shaytân (Satan) causes you to forget, then after the remembrance sit not you in the company of those people who are the *Thâlimîn* (polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.).⁵⁶﴾

And He said:

﴿وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مَثَلْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا﴾

﴿And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this *Qur'ân*) that when you hear the Verses of Allâh being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them. Surely, Allâh will collect the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell.⁵⁷﴾

So we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, would not have remained there if *kufr* or *shirk* was being committed.

- Even if it was confirmed that the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, entered this church, then we would say that not only did he not approve of their *kufr*, but he went there to save someone from their *kufr*. So how could a situation where it isn't confirmed that *kufr* was being committed in their presence be used as evidence for the permissibility of the Muslim going out of his way to congratulate a disbeliever for their *kufr*?

Allâh Permitted Kindness toward Disbelievers and Obligated Justice and Goodness toward All

Some of those who try to permit congratulating disbelievers on their holidays state that these congratulatory statements would fall beneath the evidence of saying good words and being kind. They say:

Allâh, تَعَالَى, stated:

﴿وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا﴾

﴿And speak good to people.⁵⁸﴾

And He stated:

⁵⁶ *Sûrat al-An'âm*, 68

⁵⁷ *Sûrat an-Nisâ'*, 140

⁵⁸ *Sûrat al-Baqarah*, 83

﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾
Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allâh loves those who deal with equity. ⁵⁹

أَسْمَاءُ بِنْتُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَتْ: أَتَنِي أُمِّي رَاغِبَةً فِي عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "أَصِلْهَا؟" قَالَ: "نَعَمْ." قَالَ ابْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ: فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهَا: "لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ..."
 On the authority of Asmâ' Bint Abî Bakr, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, who said: "My mother came to me, hoping (for my favor) during the lifetime of the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. So I asked the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "May I treat her kindly?" He replied, "Yes." ⁶⁰

However, this begs the question: What is something good and just? Is celebrating the birth of a Prophet that is worshipped beside, or even instead of, Allâh, good or just? Is celebrating the lie that Allâh was a person, and He died and was resurrected, good or just? If not, then this cannot fall under these evidences. And if someone believes that these things are good or just, then they are not Muslims at all.

On top of this, we say that being good and just is something virtuous as long as it falls within the limits of the *Sharî'ah*, and does not constitute allegiance for their religion, which this clearly would. Allâh, تَعَالَى, said:

And He said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ﴾
O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists) as friends, showing affection towards them, while they have disbelieved in what has come to you of the truth. ⁶¹

And He said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فإِنَّهُ مِنَّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾
O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyâ'* (friends, protectors, helpers), they are but *Awliyâ'* of each other. And if any amongst you takes them (as *Awliyâ'*),

⁵⁹ *Sûrat al-Mumtahinah*, 8

⁶⁰ Narrated by Al-Bukhârî in his "*Sahîh*", (#5,978)

⁶¹ *Sûrat al-Mumtahinah*, 1

then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allâh guides not those people who are the *Thâlimîn* (polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust).⁶²

The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Accepted Gifts from Disbelievers

عَنْ أَبِي حُمَيْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ قَالَ: "غَزَوْنَا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَبُوكَ وَأَهْدَىٰ مَلِكُ أَيْلَةَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَغْلَةً بَيْضَاءَ وَكِسَاهُ بُرْدًا وَكَتَبَ لَهُ بِحُرِّهِمْ."

On the authority of Abû Humayd as-Sâ'idî who said: "We accompanied the Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in the Battle of Tabûk and the king of Aylah presented a white mule and a cloak as a gift to the Prophet. And the Prophet wrote to him a peace treaty allowing him to keep authority over his country."⁶³

No one is disputing the issue of accepting gifts from disbelievers in general. However, this is an invalid use of evidence, for the following reasons.

- These Texts are concerning accepting gifts, while the issue being disputed is giving congratulations.
- These Texts are concerning general situations, while the issue being disputed is specific to celebrations of kufir.

The *Sahâbah* Gave Gifts to Disbelievers

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَأَىٰ خُلَّةَ سِيرَاءٍ عِنْدَ بَابِ الْمَسْجِدِ فَقَالَ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ اشْتَرَيْتَ هَذِهِ فَلَبِسْتَهَا يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَلِلْوَفْدِ إِذَا قَدِمُوا عَلَيْكَ." فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّمَا يَلْبَسُ هَذِهِ مَنْ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ." ثُمَّ جَاءَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْهَا خُلَّةٌ فَأَعْطَىٰ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مِنْهَا خُلَّةً فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَسَوْتَنِيهَا وَقَدْ قُلْتَ فِي خُلَّةٍ عَطَارِدٍ مَا قُلْتَ." قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنِّي لَمْ أَكْسُكَهَا لِتَلْبَسَهَا." فَكَسَاهَا عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَحَا لَهُ بِمَكَّةَ مُشْرِكًا.

‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Umar narrated that ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb saw a *Hullah Siyarâ* (i.e. a type of two-piece garment) at the door of the mosque and said, "O Messenger of Allâh, why don't you buy this and wear it on Fridays and when the delegations come to you?" The Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: "This is only worn by one who has no share in the Hereafter." Then the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, was brought a number of garments (i.e. *Hullahs*) of the same type. He gave one of them to ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and ‘Umar said, "O Messenger of Allâh, are you giving it to me to wear it when you said what you said about the *Hullah* of ‘Utârid (i.e. the vendor of the first *Hullah*)?" The Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ,

⁶² *Sûrat al-Mâ'idah*, 51

⁶³ Agreed upon, and this is one of Al-Bukhârî's phrasings.

said: “I am not giving it to you to wear it.” So ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, gave it to a brother of his in Makkah who was a *mushrik*.”⁶⁴

Again, like the previous evidence, this is not related to our topic. This is related to general situations, while we are discussing specific ones i.e. celebrations of *kufir*. As we saw earlier, Ibn al-Qâsim al-Mâlikî stated that he did not know of any dispute concerning the prohibition of giving anything to disbelievers on their celebrations.

The Prophet, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Permitted Christians to Perform Their Prayers in the *Masjid*

قَالَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ: وَحَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ قَالَ: قَدِمُوا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمَدِينَةَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ مَسْجِدَهُ حِينَ صَلَّى الْعَصْرَ. "إِلَى أَنْ قَالَ: "وَقَدْ خَانَتْ صَلَاتُهُمْ فَقَامُوا فِي مَسْجِدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "دَعُوهُمْ." فَصَلُّوا إِلَى الْمَشْرِقِ.

Ibn Is'hâq stated: “And Muhammad Ibn Ja'far Ibn az-Zubayr told me: ‘They came to the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in Al-Madînah. So they entered upon him in his *Masjid* when he prayed *Al-‘Asr*.” Until he said: “And the time for their *Salât* came, so the stood in the *Masjid* of the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, so the Messenger of Allâh, صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, said: ‘Leave them.’ Then they performed their *Salât* toward the East”⁶⁵

Ibn Rajab stated: “This (narration) is disconnected and weak. The likes of this are not used for proof.”⁶⁶

And Ibn Kathîr mentioned that another narration of this was narrated by Ibn Mardawayh from the path of Muhammad Ibn Is'hâq on the authority of ‘Âsim Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Qatâdah on the authority of Mahmûd Ibn Labîd on the authority of Râfi' Ibn Khadîj.⁶⁷ However, he was not clear if it contained the mention of praying in the *Masjid* or not, and Ibn Mardawayh's book is no longer in existence.

However, both of these chains are rejected. The first is rejected because the narrator Muhammad Ibn Ja'far Ibn az-Zubayr is not from the *Sahâbah*, so it is impossible that he was present at this event. On top of this, he only narrates from the *Tâbi'in*, so we know that he did not hear this from a Companion. So we know that there are a number of links missing between him and this story.⁶⁸

This chain, as well as the one Ibn Kathîr stated was narrated by Ibn Mardawayh, contain Muhammad Ibn Is'hâq, about who the correct opinion is that his *Hadîth* are considered

⁶⁴ Narrated by Al-Bukhârî (#2,619)

⁶⁵ “*As-Sîrah an-Nabawiyyah*”, Vol. 2/221-222

⁶⁶ “*Fat'h al-Bârî*”, by Ibn Rajab, Vol. 2/439

⁶⁷ “*Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Athîm*”, Vol. 2/51

⁶⁸ “*Taqrîb at-Tahthîb*”, pg. 471

“*Hasan*” as long as he does not contradict others or narrate something that is a fundamental on a topic, and that he clearly states that he heard it or was told it. ⁶⁹ These conditions are not present in this *Hadîth*. This story was narrated by both Al-Bukhârî ⁷⁰ and Muslim, ⁷¹ with no mention of the *Salât* being performed in the *Masjid*.

So the first chain has the defect of Muhammad Ibn Ja’far Ibn az-Zubayr narrating something from the lifetime of the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and the Muhammad Ibn Is’hâq contradicting others.

The second chain contains the defect of the indirect, implicit narrating (*‘An’annah*) of Ibn Is’hâq as well as his contradiction of trustworthy narrators. ⁷²

So, as is evident, the weakness of this *Hadîth* precludes it from being a proof for anything.

Conclusion

As is evident, there is clear evidence (i.e. consensus) that congratulating disbelievers on their holidays is prohibited. There are also many supporting evidences to prove that this, as well as other statements and actions related to assisting, taking part in and approving of these holidays is prohibited, and may reach disbelief.

On the other hand, there is no clear evidence to prove the permissibility of congratulating disbelievers on their holidays. Despite all of the disbelievers that the Prophet, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the thousands of *Sahâbah*, and then the *Tâbi’în* and those after them interacted with, we don’t have any narration of any of them ever congratulating disbelievers on their holidays or saying that it is obligatory, recommended or even permissible.

As for the evidences that are used, then they are either weak narrations that have nothing to do with the topic, or at best, are general Texts that are unrelated to the topic, and if used for this topic would contradict fundamentals of *Al-Walâ’ wal-Barâ’*.

And Allâh, تَعَالَى, knows best, and may the Blessings and Peace of Allâh be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions and all of those who follow them on the correct path until the Day of Resurrection.

Haytham Sayfaddîn,

⁶⁹ Look to “*Tah’tihb al-Kamâl Fî Asmâ’ ar-Rijâl*”, by Al-Mizzî, Vol. 24/422, “*Siyar A’lâm an-Nubalâ*”, by Ath-Thahabî, Vol. 3/475, “*Imârat al-Qubûr*” by Al-Mu’allimî al-Yamânî, pg. 32.

⁷⁰ “*Sahîh al-Bukhârî*”, (#4,380)

⁷¹ “*Sahîh Muslim*”, (#2,420)

⁷² “*Jâmi’ at-Tahsîl Fî Ahkâm al-Marâsîl*”, by Salâh ad-Dîn al-‘Alâ’î, pg. 666

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